



best bits ◀

■ **This fall the U.S. Department of Agriculture will release the 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA).** The guidelines are released every 5 years and focus on helping Americans eat healthfully, reach and maintain a healthy weight and reduce their risk for conditions such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease and obesity. The DGA are for anyone age 2 and older. Topics under review include dietary patterns; food sustainability and safety; and food and physical activity environments.

■ **Traveling?** Most medications should be kept at temperatures between 59°F to 86°F (although many require storage at 68°F to 77°F). If you're traveling by car, do not store them in the trunk; when flying, stow in carry-on luggage. Check labels for proper storage temperature. (For mail-order prescriptions, be aware that heat-sensitive items are packaged with coolants.)

■ **Having a bad workday?** Don't let it lead to impatience with coworkers and customers. Before entering a discussion with potential conflict, take these steps: Don't raise your voice, place blame or get angry and say things you'll regret. Listen and learn the other person's point of view. Focus on solutions and get help if necessary.

Is it possible to prevent heart disease? Yes, it is. During **American Heart Month**, review all the positive choices you can make for your heart. Check the boxes that apply to you.

- 1.** I keep my **waist circumference** below 35 inches (for women) or below 40 inches (for men). Numbers above these indicate excess belly fat, which raises heart disease risk (see "Lowdown on Body Fat").
- 2.** I don't **smoke** (or, I'm ready to quit). Cigarette smokers are 2 to 3 times more likely than nonsmokers to die from coronary heart disease.
- 3.** I get at least 30 minutes of cardio **exercise** 5 days a week, plus 2 to 3 strength training workouts. Routine exercise strengthens your heart.
- 4.** I limit **saturated** and **trans fats** and have low-fat dairy, lean protein and at least 2 cups of fruits and 2½ cups of vegetables daily.
- 5.** I get my **blood pressure, cholesterol, triglycerides** and **blood sugar** checked as my health care provider advises.
- 6.** I limit **alcohol** to 1 drink a day (for women) or 2 drinks a day (for men). Excessive alcohol intake can increase blood pressure and triglycerides. (A drink is 1 ounce of liquor or 8 ounces of beer or wine.)

Scoring: If you answered **yes** to at least 4 questions, well done. If you've got changes to make, focus on 1 at a time, starting now.

top health

Lowdown on Body Fat

You may not want to think about your body fat, but do you know where you carry fat can affect your risk for some conditions?

The fat directly under your skin is **subcutaneous**. You'll find most of this fat in the buttocks, hips, thighs and upper arms.

Visceral fat resides deeper and wraps around your stomach, liver, intestines, kidneys and other organs in your abdomen. Some fat is needed to pad your organs and protect them, but excess abdominal fat poses

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*"Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds that you plant."
- Robert Louis Stevenson*

This Edition

- ➔ Goodbye Tobacco, for Good
- ➔ Serious Exercise for Homebodies
- ➔ Secrets of Organic Labeling

Goodbye Tobacco, for Good



If you recently quit tobacco, avoiding relapse is the final stage of kicking your habit. Giving in to just 1 cigarette or dip is a minor setback you quickly correct; a relapse is returning to your old pattern of using.

Don't let 1 little slip become a slide into relapse. Avoid telling yourself, *I've given in so I may as well give up.* Quickly renew your commitment to quitting for good.

5 Keys to Preventing Relapse

- 1. Don't have even one.** People who avoid that first puff or chew are more likely to succeed over time.
- 2. Remove temptations.** Avoid places and situations that trigger your urges, such as alcohol use, socializing with tobacco users or boredom.
- 3. Don't give in to stress.** It's a major trigger for smoking or dipping, and in actuality tobacco use causes stress. Fortunately, breaking the cycle of nicotine addiction will significantly reduce the stress in your everyday life.
- 4. Get support.** Call a friend or your quitline coach.
- 5. Get medical advice.** If you have continued depression, insomnia or withdrawal symptoms – or worry about weight gain – see your health care provider.

Don't put yourself down if you relapse – it means you need to try a different approach to quitting. Your health care provider can help you find a method that works for you – for good.



Serious Exercise for Homebodies

Is working out at home as effective as a gym workout? Yes. You can get fit and slim without a gym.

Create an official workout zone at home – even if it's small, you're more likely to use a space dedicated to exercise.

Strive to reach full fitness by including multiple forms of exercise. Here are some examples to kick-start your plan:

Cardio exercise: Check out space-saving elliptical trainers and treadmills; add a fitness tracker to monitor your progress.

Floor exercise: All you need is a roll-up floor mat to practice yoga poses, Pilates, push-ups and stretches. For an advanced core workout, include planks (a type of Pilates exercise) or a stability ball routine.

Weight training: Start with 3-, 5- or 8-pound weights and resistance bands to mix it up.

Machine-free workouts: Collect exercise videos that have workouts with no equipment required, such as Pilates, Zumba or circuit body weight routines.

Tip: Browse the online workout options at ACE Fitness: www.acefitness.org/acefit/ACEfit-workouts/.

Just getting started:

Get evaluated by your health care provider, particularly if you're unaccustomed to routine exercise or have health concerns.



Care for Your Rotator Cuff

Imagine your shoulder joint is injured, preventing you from doing everyday things without pain – dressing, combing your hair or reaching into a cupboard. Most shoulder injuries occur in the rotator cuff, a mesh of muscles and tendons that keeps your upper arm bone functioning within the shoulder socket, or joint.

Problems with the rotator cuff are very common. They include tendonitis, bursitis, bone spurs and injuries from overuse or lifting. Rotator cuff tendons can become inflamed from certain jobs, sports and everyday activities, especially those with repeated overhead motion.

The symptoms of rotator cuff strain or injury may be a dull ache or a sharp pain in the shoulder. You may find it hard to raise your arm or sleep if you lie on the affected shoulder. If the pain is severe or persists for several days, see your health care provider.

Recovery from rotator cuff injuries usually requires physical therapy and exercise to improve joint flexibility and muscle strength. Severe injuries that don't improve with therapy may need surgical repair.

To maintain healthy shoulders: Strengthening exercises and a few daily stretches can help protect the joint apparatus against injury and age-related weakness. Key areas include muscles in the shoulders, upper arms, back of shoulders and around the shoulder blade. Your provider or a physical therapist can help you plan a routine. It's an easy practice that may save you from injury, pain and disability.



Why Do You Procrastinate?



Imagine you are walking or jogging along a smooth path, but you keep throwing rocks and other obstacles ahead of you to make the way more difficult. It sounds silly, but that's what happens when you procrastinate. Discover the reasons behind your procrastination, and take the first step toward clearing your path.

- 1. You don't estimate time well.** You tend to cram too many tasks into a day. Then, you either can't get started because your to-do list is too daunting, or you spend too much time on 1 task and never get to the rest.
- 2. You don't like what you are doing.** It's tempting to put off activities you don't enjoy.
- 3. You tell yourself you work best under pressure.** You might get a thrill out of waiting until the last minute and then pulling off the job in record time.
- 4. You're afraid you'll fail.** You put off starting a task because you fear you won't be able to do it successfully.

Procrastination can lead to chronic stress, substandard work and lack of confidence. Create a distraction-free workspace, set realistic goals and visualize yourself successfully completing tasks to get back on track.

best bites Produce Pick of the Month: Spaghetti Squash

Spaghetti squash, a type of winter squash, gets its name from the pale-yellow flesh that can be fluffed into stringy, pasta-like threads. Top with your favorite sauce or serve as a vegetable side dish. It contains many nutrients and averages 42 calories per cup.



Secrets of Organic Food Labeling

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

If you pay a premium for organic apples and free-range chicken, you may wonder if the package claims are genuine. Here's an overview of what's required to make these healthy-sounding declarations.



Foods labeled as organic must meet USDA standards, which are based on the **Organic Foods Production Act**. These standards cover the product from farm to table. The **USDA Organic logo** verifies that the organic farm:

- Supports animal welfare.
- Gives animals access to the outdoors rather than keeping them in cages or pens.
- Does not use genetically modified ingredients, irradiation, synthetic fertilizers, antibiotics, growth hormones or prohibited pesticides.
- Has yearly on-site USDA inspections.

Good to know: If your vegetables and fruits don't bear the USDA Organic logo, look at the produce sticker. If the first number in the 5-digit code is a 9, you've got an organic product. Conventional produce starts with a 4 (regular) or 3 (hybrid, such as a grapple – grape and apple).

The USDA Organic symbol is not handed out lightly. There are many regulations, and some companies forego the process. Instead, they use vague terminology to make their products sound organic. Watch out for:

- The term **natural** – it's not regulated, so it's meaningless.
- The terms **GMO free** and **fair trade certified** – they don't mean **organic**.

Note: Be aware of products imported from countries that don't regulate organic claims.



Bottom line: Look for the USDA Organic logo. It verifies that the product you're buying has 95% or more organic content and follows all of the rules listed above.

Spaghetti Squash Sauté with Garlic

EASY | RECIPE

From Personal Best®

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 spaghetti squash (about 2 pounds) | 1-2 tsp minced garlic |
| 1 tbsp olive oil | 2 tsp fresh lemon juice |
| | ¼ tsp black pepper |



1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Cut spaghetti squash in half; remove seeds and pulp.
2. Place squash, cut side down, in a baking dish; add ½ inch of water. Bake 35-40 minutes, or until squash is tender.
3. Remove squash from baking dish and cool 5-10 minutes, or until you can handle the shell.
4. Using a fork, scrape spaghetti-like strands from shell into a bowl.
5. In large skillet, heat oil over low heat; add garlic and cook about 5 minutes.
6. Increase heat to medium and add squash; season with lemon and pepper. Cook, tossing frequently, until squash is hot.

Options: Top with sliced olives, sliced sundried red peppers or a light sprinkle of Parmesan cheese.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving:

72 calories | 1g protein | 3.8g total fat | 0.6g saturated fat | 2.5g mono fat | 0.4g poly fat | 0.0mg cholesterol | 10g carbohydrates | 2.2g fiber | 33mg sodium

Stay in Touch

Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

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top safety

Preventing Mold



Damp kitchens, bathrooms, laundry rooms and basements can be perfect environments for mold to grow. Here are some ways to prevent mold from developing:

- > **Check** often for leaks – pipes, clogged drains, sump pumps and excessive condensation can be sources for water to collect. If you see condensation, your indoor humidity may be too high.
- > **Use** a dehumidifier in moisture-prone areas such as basements.
- > **Make** sure moisture-prone areas are well ventilated. Open doors to improve airflow.
- > **Dry** shower walls and doors after use.

- > **Clean** up spills or water from leaks as soon as possible. If an area floods, use a mop and then fans to dry the area completely.
- > **Clear** areaways and gutters often.
- > **Use** a bathroom fan or open the windows while showering.
- > **Check** window and door seals to make sure they are intact and in good condition.
- > **Provide** adequate drainage around your home and make sure grading doesn't allow water to flow toward your home.
- > **Perform** visual mold checks in moisture-prone areas.

If you discover a mold problem in your home, it's best to call a mold professional to remove it. If you use a mold removal product, always read manufacturers' labels; follow instructions and use in a well-ventilated area.

expert advice

By Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP

Q: What are diuretics?

A: Diuretics, sometimes called **water pills**, are medications that flush unneeded salt and water from the body into the urine. This flushing action helps improve fluid retention in disorders such as leg swelling and heart failure. Diuretics are often the first treatment for high blood pressure, and have an additive action when combined with other antihypertensive drugs. Health

care providers also use diuretics to treat kidney stones, kidney failure, glaucoma and polycystic ovary syndrome.

Several types and strengths of diuretics are available. The drugs are generally well tolerated but can have side effects. Common adverse reactions include increased urination, dizziness and low blood potassium. Increased blood sugar and cholesterol, rashes, muscle cramps and joint disorders such as gout can also occur. As with any medication, talk to your provider about the potential benefits and risks before taking diuretics.

Lowdown on Body Fat

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a greater health risk than subcutaneous fat. It can produce inflammatory substances that promote diseases such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke.

Scientists use waist size to determine if we have too much abdominal fat.

Women with a waist size of 35 inches or more and men with a waist size of 40 inches or more may have greater risk for the conditions listed above. Even normal-weight adults are at higher risk if they have excess belly fat. **Tip:** To measure waist circumference, run a tape measure around your torso just above your navel.

Inactivity adds to your risk. Researchers at Duke University Medical Center observed that sedentary adults experienced a nearly 9% gain in visceral fat after 6 months without exercise.

Good news: When you lose excess weight, you shed fat all over your body. In addition to lower-calorie, healthful eating, adding exercise to your weight-loss plan can help you lose visceral fat.

So what works? Several studies show brisk exercise 5 times a week will help trim your waistline and the fat underneath. Gradually increase your exercise time to an hour a day on most days of the week.

Losing a little around the middle could gain you a lot.